



Minnesota's 4th District **E-Report!**

Congresswoman Betty McCollum

"Serving Minnesota's Families"



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Hot News!

Displaced Workers Receive Extended Benefits

This week the U.S. House of Representatives passed an extension of benefits for more than 2.5 million out of work Americans, but not before the deadline had expired for a quarter million people. Rep. Betty McCollum said Republican leaders in Congress ignored displaced workers last year, leaving 11,200 Minnesotans without benefits until today.

"Just weeks before the holidays, Republican leaders in Congress chose to leave town with critical business unfinished," said Rep. McCollum. "Just in Minnesota, more than 99,000 people are without jobs. The House Republican Leadership has finally acted to help struggling families who are facing economic hardship."

Before Congress adjourned last year, McCollum urged Republican leaders to act on legislation to extend temporary unemployment benefits. Unfortunately, Republican leaders refused to consider the legislation before the program expired.

The *Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 2002* extends benefits by 5 months to June 1, 2003. The bill is similar to a bipartisan bill to extend unemployment benefits through March, which was negotiated by Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-NY) and Sen. Don Nickles (R-OK) and supported by the White House. The House passed the legislation by a vote of 416 to 4.

"Congress has a responsibility to make sure workers affected by September 11th and the economic slowdown can provide for their families while seeking employment," said McCollum.

In the U.S., more than 8 million workers are currently unemployed, 750,000 lost their unemployment insurance on December 28, 2002, and an estimated 180,000 workers per week have lost their benefits since then.

"Pic" of the Week



Rep. McCollum meets Patricia Buckley of Northern Ireland outside her Washington, DC office. Last year, Ms. Buckley participated in a program called Community Advocate Mentor Program (CAMP), where she traveled to Washington DC to strengthen her understanding of public policy. Rep. McCollum hosted her stay on Capitol Hill for an afternoon.

Rep. McCollum Visits Northern Ireland

Rep. Betty McCollum visits Belfast, Northern Ireland this week to observe recent developments in the Good Friday Agreement and human rights with the International Women's Democracy Center (IWDC).

"Ireland and the U.S. enjoy a unique and long-standing relationship. As an Irish American, this link is particularly important to me at this critical time in the peace process as I observe efforts to defend the human rights of all individuals. With the continuing struggle to implement the Good Friday Agreement, this visit is a crucial opportunity to hear and learn from the men and women that have worked so hard for lasting peace throughout all of Ireland," said Rep. McCollum.

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